

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3166

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMCONSUL BELIZE

USUN NEW YORK 483

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GUATEMALA 6509

TEGUCIGALPA FOR SHLAUDEMAM

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, GT, UK, BH

SUBJECT: GOG VIEWS ON BELIZE

1. SUMMARY: IN WIDE RANGING DISCUSSION OF BELIZE ISSUE WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAM, PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ABOUT IMPENDING TALKS WITH UK IN PANAMA. PRESIDENT STATED GOG WOULD BRING UP QUESTION AT PANAMA OF CESSION OF BELIZEAN TERRITORY TO GUATEMALA, WHICH WAS SINE QUA NON OF AGREEMENT FOR GUATEMALA. PRESIDENT VOICED CONCERN ABOUT LIKELY CUBAN INTERVENTION IN BELIZE IF UK-GOG NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO FAIL. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED GOG DESIRE TO SEEK SOLUTION WITH UK. SHLAUDEMAM NOTED USG HOPE FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH UK. WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE CUBAN PENETRATION OF BELIZE, SHLAUDEMAM EMPHASIZED USG COMMITMENT TO MUTUAL SECURITY IN HEMISPHERE. END SUMMARY

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2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMANN, ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE, HAD VERY USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON BELIZE DURING CALL ON PRESIDENT LAUGERUD ON SEPTEMBER 16.

3. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ON FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH UK IN PANAMA ON SEPTEMBER 21-22. HE SAID THAT IF BOTH SIDES GAVE WAY A BIT, THE PANAMA MEETING SHOULD BE SUCCESSFUL AND PROVIDE BASIS FOR CONTINUATION OF NEGOTIATIONS. HE STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT GUATEMALA WILL BRING UP THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE AT PANAMA. THIS IS MOST SENSITIVE QUESTION OF ALL, GOG REALIZES, BUT IT IS ALSO SINE QUA NON OF AGREEMENT FOR GUATEMALA. QUESTION WILL NOT BE RAISED IN PLENARY SESSION BECAUSE OF SENSITIVITY BUT WILL BE BROACHED DIRECTLY WITH ROWLANDS BY FONMINISTER MOLINA. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONING BY SHALUDEMANN, PRESIDENT INDICATED GOG DID NOT NECESSARILY EXPECT IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM ROWLANDS AT PANAMA. GOG WILL PRESENT ITS PROPOSAL ON CESSION OF TERRITORY BE BELIZE IN EXPECTATION THAT UK WILL STUDY IT AND COME BACK AND MAKE COUNTER PROPOSALS. GOG FULLY REALIZES IT IS NO LONGER REALISTIC IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO MAINTAIN ITS CLAIM TO ALL OF BELIZE. AT PANAMA, GOG WOULD GIVE UP ITS CLAIM TO THE MAJORITY OF BELIZE BUT WOULD PUT FORTH A CLAIM TO SOUTHERN PORTION. THERE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE A PERIOD OF BARGAINING AND COUNTER PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD ENSUE. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, GUATEMALA WOULD HAVE TO RETAIN A SUFFICIENTLY LARGE PIECE OF TERRITORY IN THE SOUTH TO GIVE IT UNHEDERED ACCESS TO THE OPEN SEAS THROUGH THE BAY OF AMATIQUE. IT COULD NOT ACCEPT A SITUATION LIKE ISRAEL FOUND ITSELF IN THE BAY OF ELATH, WITH ACCESS TO THE OPEN SEA BLOCKED BECAUSE OF OVERLAPPING TERRITORIAL WATERS OF HONDURAS AND BELIZE.

4. LAUGERUD VOICED CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSION ABOUT CUBA. SAID THAT AS LONG AS UK REMAINED IN BELIZE THERE WAS NO DANGER OF CUBAN INFILTRATION, BUT IF UK WERE TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO BELIZE WITHOUT A SUCCESSFUL OUT-COME TO UK-GOG NEGOTIATIONS, THEN CASTRO WOULD NOT HESITATE TO OFFER SUPPORT TO BELIZE. CASTRO WAS INVOLVED

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IN ANGOLA, IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA AND WITH HIS 100,000 MAN ARMY AND SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY THERE WAS NO REASON HE COULD NOT MOVE INTO BELIZE A SCANT 200 MILES AWAY. CUBA WAS ALREADY SUPPORTING SUBVERSION IN NICARAGUA, HONDURAS, COSTA RICA, AND GUATEMALA, AND IT WOULD WELCOME CHANCE TO MOVE INTO BELIZE.

5. PRESIDENT NOTED ONE OF DIFFICULT POLITICAL PROBLEMS HE FACES WAS FACT THAT GUATEMALA'S CONSTITUTION SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT BELIZE IS PART OF GUATEMALAN NATIONAL TERRITORY AND THAT ANY RETREAT FROM THIS POSITION INVOLVING CESSION OF TERRITORY TO INDEPENDENT BELIZE WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THE CONGRESS AND THE COUNCIL OF STATE MEETING IN JOINT SESSION. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT A FACE-SAVING COMPROMISE WAS NECESSARY FOR GUATEMALA. IF SUCH COMPROMISE DID NOT PROVIDE FOR AT LEAST SOME TERRITORY IN BELIZE TO BE HANDED OVER TO GUATEMALA THEN IT WOULD NOT BE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE TO GUATEMALAN PUBLIC OPINION.

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TEGUCIGALPA FOR SHLAUDEMAM

6. PRESIDENT CONTINUED THAT HE BELIEVED UK WAS NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH AND THAT MAJOR PROBLEM WAS WITH PRICE GOVERNMENT IN BELIZE. IT WAS IN EVERYBODY'S INTEREST- US, UK, AND GUATEMALA - TO REACH A FRIENDLY SETTLEMENT OF THE BELIZE ISSUE, BECAUSE OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE A SOURCE OF PERMANENT TENSION IN THE AREA. GUATEMALA WAS

LIKEWISE NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH AND HOPED FOR A SATISFACTORY OUTCOME. NONETHELESS, IF THE TALKS SHOULDNOT SUCCEED AND THE UK WERE TO GRANT UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE TO BELIZE, THEN GUATEMALA WOULD HAVE NO RECOURSE EXCEPT TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION AGAINST BELIZE. THIS, HOWEVER, WAS THE LAST THING GUATEMALA WISHED TO DO AND IT WOULD TAKE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO AVOID HOSTILITIES.

7. SHLAUDEMAN NOTED US HOPE FOR A CUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. US IMPRESSION IS ALSO THAT UK IS NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH AND THAT PROBLEM IS MAINLY WITH BELIZE. WITH REPSECT TO PRESIDENT'S
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COMMENTS ON EVENTUAL CUBAN PENETRATION OF BELIZE, SHLAUDEMAN EMPHASIZED THAT THE USG MAINTAINS ITS COMMITMENT TO THE RIO TREATY AND MUTUAL SECURITY IN THE HEMISPHERE.

8. COMMENT: PRESIDENT WAS BOTH FORCEFUL AND ARTICULATE IN PRESENTING GOG VIEWS. HE SEEMED DEADLY SERIOUS ABOUT SEEKING A SOLUTION -- BUT ONE INCLUDING TERRITORIAL CONCESSION.

9. DURING SUBSEQUENT SHLAUDEMAN CALL ON FONMINISTER MOLINA ORANTES LATTER MADE MANY OF SAME POINTS WHICH PRESIDENT MADE, SIMILARLY IN CONCILIATONE, ALTHOUGH STILL STRESSIN NEED FOR GUATEMALA OF FACE-SAVING CESSION OF BELIZEAN TERRITORY.
ANDREWS

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